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SUBJECT: UN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL: COMMITTEE ON NGOS

REF: A. USUN 516

[B](#). STATE 70801

[C](#). STATE 60300

[1](#)1. Summary: At its resumed session May 29 - June 6 and June 25, ECOSOC,s Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (CNGO) recommended ECOSOC consultative status for a number of U.S. NGOs, including the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) and the Hudson Institute. Action on the Democracy Coalition Project's application was deferred until the Committee's next session in January 2009, along with the applications of several other NGOs. The application of the Human Rights Foundation was rejected (ref A). ECOSOC is expected to approve most or all of these decisions when it considers the Committee's report July 21; as instructed (ref B), USUN will seek to have ECOSOC overturn the Committee's decision against the Human Rights Foundation. End summary.

[1](#)2. During the resumed session, the CNGO had before it 126 applications for consultative status, including applications deferred from earlier sessions. Of those applications, the CNGO recommended 64 for consultative status, deferred 57 for further consideration, and closed consideration of two organizations. It did not recommend consultative status for one organization and two organizations withdrew their applications. The CNGO also reviewed the quadrennial reports of 138 accredited NGOs.

[1](#)3. Among the recommended NGOs were several US-based NGOs including African Child Care Association, American Association of University Women, Health for Humanity, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Hudson Institute, International Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Junior Achievement Worldwide, National Women,s Studies Association, Partnership for Global Justice, and Service for Peace.

[1](#)4. The Hudson Institute, which had been deferred from prior sessions, faced strong Cuban opposition due to an article written by an affiliate of the Institute that criticized Cuba,s human rights record. The Hudson Institute also faced some last minute criticism from Russia, China, Qatar, Egypt, Pakistan, Angola and Sudan when Anne Bayefsky, a senior fellow of the Institute, published an op-ed article in the New York Daily News critical of the CNGO during the same week the Institute was asking the CNGO to recommend it for ECOSOC accreditation. In the end, however, the Committee recommended the application to ECOSOC, which is expected to approve it on July 21.

[1](#)5. The CNGO also recommended granting consultative status to the previously deferred application of the US-based Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. HIAS had faced strong opposition from Egypt, Qatar, and Pakistan and from observer delegations Syria and Palestine, who questioned its refugee resettlement activities and its stance on UN resolutions dealing with Palestine. After repeated appearances before the Committee by HIAS representatives, however, and lobbying by Ambassador Khalilzad and others, the application was finally approved.

[1](#)6. A Dutch Gay and Lesbian NGO, Federatie van Nederlandse

Verenigingen Tot Integratie Van Homoseksualiteit, whose application had been previously deferred, was recommended for consultative status by a one-vote margin, over strong opposition led by Egypt, Pakistan, and Qatar. The UK called for a vote on the application and the result was 7 in favor (Columbia, Dominica, Israel, Peru, Romania, UK, and US) and 6 opposed (China, Egypt, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, and Sudan), with 5 abstentions (Angola, Burundi, Guinea, India, Turkey) and 1 absence (Cuba). Cuba's absence may have been the key in this narrow victory, and it is not unlikely that the NGO's opponents will try to overturn the Committee's decision in the ECOSOC meeting July 21.

¶7. Of the applications deferred until the January 2009 CNGO session, several are U.S. NGOS including Assyrian Academic Society, Democracy Coalition Project, the Human Rights House Foundation, International Association of Women Judges, International Reading Association, and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. Most of these applications were deferred because some Committee members posed more questions to the NGOs (a common tactic, used by some members of the CNGO to defer consideration of the applications of NGOs with which they do not agree politically).

¶8. The application of the Armenian Fund, U.S.A. was closed because the NGO and its representative, who addressed the CNGO in person, refused to adhere to the UN terminology for the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. The NGO representative stated that to use the UN terminology would be picking sides in the controversy, which the NGO could not do. The application of Italian NGO Ma Qualcuno Pensi ad Abele was also closed, the Committee deciding the NGO had failed to respond to the CNGO's questions.

¶9. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), led by Cuba, filed a complaint against the U.S. NGO World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ). The NAM complaint alleged that during the sixth special session of the Human Rights Council, on "Human Rights Violations Emanating from Israeli Military Incursion in the Occupied Palestinian Territory," held in Geneva on 23-24 January 2008, the representative of the WUPJ had violated the principles governing NGOs in ECOSOC consultative status by not abiding by a ruling of the Council president to stay within the scope of the agenda item in addressing the Council. The NAM complaint asked for withdrawal of the WUPJ's ECOSOC accreditation. The CNGO finally agreed to close the matter with only a letter of reprimand. Per instructions (ref C), the United States joined consensus on the letter, but made a statement in which it underlined the 36 years of exemplary service the WUPJ had provided to the UN and expressed its regret that the CNGO did not close the matter, without the letter of reprimand, once it had received apologies both in writing and verbally from the WUPJ's representatives.

¶10. In the January 2008 session of the CNGO, the United States succeeded in adding to the agenda of the CNGO's working group an agenda item, entitled, "Ways to ensure that NGOs, being considered for consultative status or reviewed for any other matter, are not involved in any international criminal activity, including terrorism, as envisaged in ECOSOC resolution 1996/31." Cuba, Egypt, and Qatar opposed this initiative, saying the issue is outside the scope of the mandate of the CNGO and the use of UN terrorist and criminal lists will be prejudicial to Islamic NGOs because the main UN terrorist list is the al-Qaeda and Taliban sanctions list maintained by the 1267 Committee of the Security Council. During the CNGO's resumed session in May-June, Cuba, Egypt, and Qatar tried to limit the time of discussion on this matter in the working group so they could claim the group had discussed the issue without reaching a consensus. USUN, however, was able to get the same agenda item added to the 2009 agenda of the working group.

¶11. Comment: The CNGO's contentious 2008 sessions show the extent to which some members of the CNGO tend to make

decisions based on political considerations rather than the merits of the NGOs applying for accreditation. This was particularly evident in Cuba's virulent opposition to the Human Rights Foundations's application. Under these circumstances, overturning the CNGO's decision against the Foundation will be an uphill battle.

Khalilzad